

Wildlife Program

Week of April 15-21, 2013

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Sharp-tailed Grouse Recovery: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff led a group that translocated 20 male and 19 female sharp-tailed grouse from south-central Idaho to the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area in Lincoln County, Washington. Additional non-agency participants in the translocation effort included Kourtney Stonehouse (Washington State University), Jason Lowe (Bureau of Land Management), Kerrin Doloughan (Bureau of Land Management), Penny Ohanjanian (British Columbia), Leigh Anne Isaac (British Columbia), Randy Smith (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Jack Connelly (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Leslie Robb (Volunteer), Richard Whitney (Colville Confederated Tribes), and Sam Rushing (Colville Confederated Tribes). There were many other individuals that offered to help, but the rapid capture of birds (three mornings) negated the need.

The translocation is a continuation of a multi-year effort to reinvigorate populations of sharp-tailed grouse in north-central Washington and has involved the cooperation of numerous states, agencies, and individuals including WDFW, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Colville Confederated Tribes, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Audubon Society, and private landowners.

Presentations - NatureServe 2013 Biodiversity without Borders Conference: John Pierce co-presented (with staff from Nebraska, New Mexico, NatureServe, and a representative from the Western Governors' Association) results and progress of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) Crucial Habitat project at a session on Landscape Conservation at the NatureServe's national conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The presentation was well received and summarized the history and background of the WGA project, the results and progress to date on developing regional and state crucial habitat datasets, lessons learned, and the need for future data sharing agreements with NatureServe (and other partners) to ensure long term maintenance and stewardship of this west-wide dataset.

Publication: Kertson, B. N., R. D. Spencer and C. E. Grue. 2013. Demographic influences on cougar residential use and interactions with people in western Washington. *Journal of Mammalogy* 94: 269-281.

Summary: We quantified cougar (*Puma concolor*) use of residential areas and interactions with people in western Washington from 2003 to 2008 to characterize the ecology and risks associated with an adaptable large carnivore residing in a wildland-urban environment. We captured 32 cougars (16 males and 16 females) and estimated 33 annual utilization distributions

(UDs) for 27 individuals. Ninety-three percent of cougars (n=27; 15 males and 12 females) used residential areas with an average UD overlap of 16.86% (SD = 17.05%, n = 33). There were no differences between male and female or resident and transient use of residential areas, but subadult use was significantly higher than that of adults. The interaction rate for radio-collared cougars was low (1.6 interactions/1,000 radiodays) and all demographic classes were involved in similar numbers of interactions. Use of residential areas in western Washington appears to be a function of the adaptive and mobile nature of the cougar exploiting suitable habitat and resources within the matrix of residential development. Management strategies that target problem individuals and maintain older age structures in local populations coupled with proactive landscape planning and public education in residential areas at the wildland–urban interface may provide an effective strategy for decreasing cougar–human interaction.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) List 2013 Annual Update - Biologist Azerrad made changes to the PHS list as part of an annual PHS List Update. Each year an annual update is done for minor revisions to the list. More significant revisions only occur during major update periods. Most revisions in this year’s update were to the range maps found in the PHS list. A spreadsheet of all changes is on Wildlife Diversity Division’s SharePoint site. It’s organized by taxa and includes a column for sorting by DFW region. The online version of the [PHS List](#) as well as the [county-specific PHS List](#) reflects all recent changes.

Fish and Wildlife Planner - Spring Issue: Biologist Azerrad released the latest issue of the Fish and Wildlife Planner newsletter. This newsletter is developed for Washington’s planning professionals. It includes articles about relevant activities occurring at WDFW, case studies of jurisdictions that have tackled difficult issues using innovative approaches, updates on workshops and other learning opportunities, as well as a directory of contacts at our agency to answer planning-related questions. The current issue highlights Puget Sound Partnership’s newly revamped Low Impact Development Manual.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Pend Oreille County Elk Survey: District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base did a one evening blitz before dark surveying and classifying elk in Pend Oreille County. Base observed 80 elk in three areas where elk traditionally occur every spring, which anecdotally are more elk than ever documented in one day for the spring green-up survey effort. Altogether there were 6 bulls (5

still with antlers), 53 cows, and 21 calves for a ratio of 11 bulls: 100 cows: 40 calves. Additional elk surveys in District 1 are in progress by a local Master Hunter accruing needed service hours.



Elk and white-tailed deer (in background) observed within Game Management Unit 113, Selkirk, where they traditionally occur during spring green-up.

Lincoln County Prairie Grouse Project: Biologist Ferguson prepared and surveyed one historic sharp-tailed lek site in the Phantom area east of Telford Road and found an active lek with a minimum of four enthusiastic displaying sharp-tails. Biologist Atamian tracked radio tagged birds on the ground and via the air this week. Several missing birds were found via the flight and a sage grouse hen that had been heard in mortality mode south of Twin lakes was picked up alive in the middle of Swanson



Close-up of a male sharp-tail eye comb as it is processed prior to translocation.

Lakes Wildlife Area. However, a few birds are still missing and a couple of recently translocated sharp-tail hens were beeping mortality. Biologist Atamian conducted a Sharp-tail grouse lek search in the historic Tracy Rocks Lek area, no luck finding or hearing sharp-tails.

Wildlife Areas



Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) Fire Wood Poaching – SCWA was alerted to an area where a number of live western larch trees had been recently cut down by chainsaw. The site was visited and eight recently felled trees were found.

The road that accesses the site was signed at the beginning of April to temporarily close the road until it firms up to prevent rutting damage. The signs had been pulled down and were found on the ground.

This situation has been brought to the attention of Enforcement staff. Fire wood cutting of dead and down trees is allowed on SCWA with a wood permit.

REGION 2

None

REGION 3

None

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Common Loon Efforts: Biologists Anderson and Smith launched the loon platform at Klaus Lake. The biologists had one loon on Lake Hancock. The Calligan Lake platform was in good condition, but the territorial pair was not found during this visit. A number of recreational anglers and permit holders were found driving around or fishing the Snoqualmie Tree Farm, which was a bit unusual for this time of year given that snow was found above 2,000 feet.

Bald Eagle Management: Biologist Anderson provided nest information and directed property owners to USFWS for eagle management needs. Biologist Anderson and Smith are following-up on recent nest lead requests by local municipalities and USFWS.

Heron Colony Management: Biologist Anderson is working with a number of Seattle applicants on site-specific heron management plans. Anderson has been regularly in direct contact with Seattle Department of Development and Planning staff regarding their heron consideration laws and assisting applicants. This includes gathering information on activity and status of colonies from volunteers for major municipal projects, checking in on current activity with volunteers and appropriate follow-up by the District 12 team.

Peregrine Falcon Management Assistance: Biologist Anderson phone conferenced with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) regarding nesting Peregrines on the Ballard Bridge. Anderson and SDOT have received a number of inquiries from the public regarding the ongoing earthquake retrofit work on the bridge and activities approaching falcons on eggs. Anderson has suggested SDOT contact USFWS to examine any needs with them. Anderson has offered management consideration consultation, per Growth Management Act.

Calligan Creek Hydroproject, N. Fork Snoqualmie, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) consultation: Biologist Anderson, along with other staff biologists,



Biologists Anderson and Smith launched a loon platform at Klaus Lake.

provided input and assistance to Habitat Major Projects Mitigation Biologist Applegate regarding WDFW review and comment on proposed monitoring schemes for the Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) Calligan Creek Hydropower project located on the Snoqualmie Tree Farm.

Oregon Spotted Frog (OSF) Survey Project: Biologist Danilson worked with seasonal Biologists Johnson and Bauman to plan the wrap up of the 2013 Oregon spotted frog survey season. Tasks included scheduling final site visits, organizing and summarizing data, returning field equipment, and resolving timesheet issues. Danilson also discussed the status of the project budget with Wildlife Program administrative personnel and the project liaison at USFWS.

This is the third year that District 14 personnel have conducted OSF surveys in Skagit and Whatcom counties. The objective of the project, funded by the USFWS, is to further delineate the geographic range of this sensitive species to assist this agency in conducting a status review of OSF in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA).



Female Oregon spotted frog sunning on an algae mat.

Peregrine Falcons: Two peregrine falcon issues in District 14 that came up during the past week included a potential new nest site in Skagit County and additional follow-up on a proposed forest conversion near another urban site. Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn followed up with local municipalities and internal staff regarding these two issues. Additional monitoring (and coordination with citizen volunteers) will help inform whether/when to implement access closures at these sites.

Breeding Snipe Surveys: Biologist Anderson continued site reviews on Ebey Island and discussed cattle grazing with the lessee on Ebey. Plans are a bit vague for when and where cattle will be put out, and when the fence WDFW has requested will go in. In the meantime, Anderson has been setting out transects and gearing up to begin the surveys.

Private Lands/Access

Spring Bear Damage Hunts: The North Skagit and Monroe spring bear hunts began Monday, April 15, and run to June 15. Region 4 staff updated hunter contact and vehicle information provided at the mandatory hunter meeting. Staff distributed materials to Department law enforcement as well as private security staff within the units.

Skagit Wildlife Area Agreements: Biologist Roozen assisted Skagit Wildlife Area staff with agricultural leases on WDFW lands in the Region. Roozen and Manager Rotton continued discussions with local growers regarding agricultural plans as well as public access as they relate to the agreements.

Skagit Land Acquisition Team: Biologists Roozen and Williams met with the Western Washington Agricultural Association to present them with an overview of ideas discussed at the April 12 meeting. Williams provided the Association with both long term strategies and potential outcomes of Department land acquisitions.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Fish Passage Project: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with WDFW Project Manager Jenni Dykstra and Washington Conservation Corp field crew to begin planting the Fish Passage Project restoration site. Planting was scheduled to begin the week of April 8, but was delayed due to high water levels at the site. Water levels receded throughout the week to allow for over 2,000 live stakes and bare root plants to be installed across the seven-plus acre site. Planting is scheduled to continue next week.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to work at the barn to improve security at the facility and general cleanup of the area. Volunteer carpenter Jeremy Maine framed in a primary wall and hung a sturdy solid-core door. Deadbolt locks will be installed to address security concerns at the facility.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Everett Alexander to finalize the 213 grazing plan for the Unit. This includes fencing to protect aquatic resources such as wetlands, and controlling the movement of cattle on the Unit. Additionally, approximately 120 pairs of cattle and calf units arrived on site on April 19 to begin grazing on the lush grass. A pre-grazing evaluation was conducted by Manager Boehm to aid with monitoring the impacts of grazing to the Unit. Overall, the Unit is in great shape, with plenty of tall grass and no visible bare spots. Lessee Everett Alexander started plowing one of the two planned barley fields in preparation for planting in June.

Manager Brian Boehm consulted with Lew Moore from the Sustainable Land Strategy (SLS) to discuss “next-steps” for SLS and Ebey Island. A meeting is scheduled for a follow-up visit with professionals from the Snohomish Conservation District, Snohomish County Agriculture, and local farmers to view the site, review historical agricultural activities, and discuss the future possibilities of the Ebey Island agricultural land, while still providing benefits to wildlife and waterfowl.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with lessees to discuss the 2013 agricultural plan for the Unit. A number of options are being considered including diversifying the crops being planted, providing better access to the Unit in the fields and changes to the amount of crop left for wildlife. The lessees are interested in working collaboratively to provide the best benefit to wildlife and recreational users.

Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program: Manager Belinda Rotton and Private Lands Biologist Brandon Roozen received offers from local growers interested in leasing WDFW South Padilla Bay properties with the potential to provide hunter access as part of their sharecrop rental payments. Offers will be reviewed and selection made.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis prepared the jet boat, tanks and trailer for fuel transport to the Island. Transport was completed and field preparations should begin this week if weather conditions cooperate.

Lake Terrell Field Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed an acre of blackberries at Lake Terrell.

Noxious Weed Assessment: Natural Resource Technician Deyo surveyed the Intalco and Lake Terrell units and mapped noxious weeds on them.

Wood Duck Nest Boxes: Natural Resource Technician Deyo began checking Wood Duck boxes on the wildlife area for occupancy.

Intalco Water Control Structure: Natural Resource Technician Deyo checked and cleared wood debris from around one of the water control structures on the Intalco Unit.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk Herd Annual Population Surveys: Biologist Danilson formatted data from the late-March and early-April elk surveys for use with Program MARK for final population estimates. Danilson also contacted Biologist McCorquodale for assistance with this analysis.

North Cascades Elk Herd Graduate Student Project: Biologist Danilson reviewed and provide feedback on the Master’s thesis proposal of Central Washington University student Anna

Yost. Ms. Yost is using the western Washington and Oregon elk habitat models (developed by the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station) in conjunction with GPS collar data from the North Cascades elk herd. The objectives of her project are to develop a refined habitat model for this area and to develop habitat management scenarios/prescriptions that could be implemented to potentially influence the current distribution of elk in this population.

Waterfowl Replacement Lands Mapping: Biologist Danilson prepared a GIS map that identified different prioritized zones to identify farm lands that could potentially be acquired to offset impacts to waterfowl as a result of proposed habitat restoration projects in District 14. The purpose of this map was to facilitate dialogue between WDFW personnel and the agricultural community leaders during a meeting which took place on April 17. This task was a direct outcome of an earlier District Team meeting

WDFW – Woodland Park Zoo Amphibian Monitoring: Biologist Anderson provided direction and relayed outreach needs to Amphibian Monitoring Project volunteers in regards to regular ID and effort questions.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Technician Otto removed a hunt blind located adjacent to a current Program hunt unit (removed blind was located on unit property). Otto used materials to refurbish and reinforce desired blind, and removed all extra materials. Otto also met with partner landowners to offer assistance and provide insight with minor waterfowl issues and concerns.



Hunting blind partially removed by technician Otto, with desired blind in background.

Bow Hill Pheasant Release Site: Manager Rotton and Biologist Roozen reviewed neighbor landowner surveys. The surveys were distributed to those adjacent to site to gather their thoughts, concerns, and questions about the 2012-13 seasons. These surveys will be passed on to Manager Link to be transferred to a spreadsheet that will be used to evaluate the site and guide in future management of this site.

Wildlife Areas

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with lessees to discuss the WDFW Private Lands Access Program. The lessees currently lease ag-land at Crescent Lake and have recently acquired an adjoining property.

Stillwater Revetment Removal Project: WDFW, Wild Fish Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited completed a working draft of the Adaptive Management Plan. This document is under review this week with a goal of approval next week. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) public comment period closed for the project and the Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance was upheld. One comment was submitted, which was in support of the project.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw compared updated as-built reports for the Milltown Island project to the PSNERP 10% design plans that were drafted in 2010 to see if any updates will need to be made to PSNERP plans to reflect current site conditions. One of three dike breaches proposed in the PSNERP plans was already completed in 2011, so a future update will be necessary.

Leque Island: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw organized a conference call between the geohydrologist who completed the groundwater study and a geohydrologist at EPA who is reviewing the study. The call is to review background information and details on the study and is scheduled for Friday, April 26.

Lake Samish Fishing Access: Manager Kessler coordinated with Whatcom County Park Managers on the summer development schedule on the Lake Samish Access. The county will be checking and monitoring for zebra mussels and wanted to coordinate with our development schedule.

Access Road Grading: Manager Kessler coordinated with Whatcom County Road crews on help with grading the fishing pier gravel access road at Lake Terrell. They should be able to help us re-gravel and grade the road this summer.

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Bald Eagle Management: Biologist DeBruyn provided resources and references to a Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) biologist regarding bald eagle usage of a stretch of the Skagit River slated to be disturbed by a highway project.

Cougar Management: Biologist DeBruyn responded to a media person who relayed a report of a cougar in a suburban neighborhood in Whatcom County. DeBruyn interviewed the reporting party, found the sighting credible and forwarded the information to Officers Jones and Valentine.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant application review: Biologist Milner met for a day with the rest of the ALEA review panel to discuss the top scoring applications and proposed budget modifications to some of the requests. The scoring and review system is different this year, so there was further discussion about what works and what can be improved now that the group has used the new online system. Final scores and votes on the proposed budget modifications will continue this week.

Navy Pika Project: Reviews of budget items and the list of products due to the Navy continued as we develop the final steps to the Navy awarding a small contract to WDFW to look for pika at the Navy's low elevation Jim Creek ownership. The process has been very collaborative and productive and we should be close to getting a contract in place.

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary: Biologist Anderson provided guidance and information to collaborating volunteers regarding the Newcastle Earth Day Festival. The group used WDFW specimen and outreach materials to promote native wildlife and the WDFW Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program.

Assistance to Enforcement – Illegal seizure of hybrid rattlesnake: Biologist Anderson was consulted regarding next steps for a recently seized illegal hybrid rattlesnake in the Olympia area. Rattlesnakes are considered “dangerous animals” under state laws and cannot be kept (even if captive bred) in WA due to this. It should be mentioned that all species of animals considered “wildlife” cannot be kept in captivity, unless proper permits are obtained. This includes native wildlife, game animals, prohibited species, deleterious exotic species, and others. Check with your local state fish and wildlife office, as well as local municipal animal control if considering exotic pets. Better yet, adopt a pet without anyone to care for it – there are many pets out there up for adoption, legally, and they just want a friend. None of them are rattlesnakes, however!

<http://www.komonews.com/news/local/Hybrid-rattlesnake-seized-from-Olympia-apartment-203400841.html>

Beaver on Lake Washington – University of Washington (UW) Botanical Gardens (Arboretum): Biologist Anderson provided information and references to staff at the UW Arboretum regarding beaver presence on Lake Washington (they are up every tributary and a constant presence). Beaver are part of the local urban ecosystem. See our Living with Beaver website to read a bit about their ecology, legalities, and how to reduce or eliminate any beaver conflict situations at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/beavers.html>

Hunter Inquiries: Biologist Smith fielded hunter inquiries regarding areas to hunt in King County. Biologist Smith discussed outreach opportunities with a youth group in the Duvall area.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with two members of the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) to discuss plans for the first official Citizen

Advisory Group's meeting. Historical issues and goals were shared by Martha Jordan, and Paul Gilmore provided a perspective on dog trials and training.

Crescent Lake Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with representatives from the Sky-Valley Tractor Club to finalize signatures for the 2013 agricultural lease. Contract requirements were reviewed, and tentative plans made for the preparation of the agricultural management plan for the 2013 planting season.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Unit: Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Curran Cosgrove completed the first round of treatment for poison hemlock on Leque Island. NRS Meis is currently researching a moth that has been used for bio-control agent on hemlock; recent reports are that the moth has been used with some success by Snohomish County. NRS Meis and NRT Cosgrove installed additional foot bridge crossing on the site.

Wiley Slough Working Group: Manager Rotton and Habitat Biologist Brian Williams met with Dike District Commissioner Stan Nelson to discuss the wording for the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the new pump station.

DeBay Slough Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove mowed, cleared brush and picked up trash at the DeBay Slough parking areas.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Training for Using Program MARK: As a new MARK user, Danilson spent time reading the user manual for the program, other relevant literature, and notes from previous discussion with Biologist McCorquodale.

Training for Washington State Blasting License: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn studied the Washington Department of Labor and Industries (WDL&I) *Safety Standards for Possession & Handling of Explosives* in preparation for the test being administered to WDFW employees on April 24. A "Class A" Blaster's License issued by WDL&I is required by WDFW employees for using, transporting, storing, etc. the explosive charges used in rocket netting. This is a commonly used technique for waterfowl capture. Because so few WDFW staff currently has their licenses, expanding our expertise in this area was identified as a high priority in last years' game management work planning process.

Performance Development Plan: Manager Kessler met with Regional Program Manager Link to discuss this year's performance development plan. Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Russell Link for a performance evaluation. Activities accomplished to date were reviewed, and a 12-month plan detailing priorities was established.

South Padilla Bay: Natural Resource Specialist Meis attended the Knotweed Working Group Meeting at Padilla Bay. The Working group coordinates with multiple agencies and private conservation groups to focus efforts and funding for knotweed control in Skagit County. The group also discusses other weed controls issues emerging in the County.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

East Lewis County Golden Eagle Surveys: Biologist Bergh joined West Fork Timber Biologist Hansen for a survey of the Watch Mountain golden eagle territory. The nest was located and an adult was flying nearby, but no other evidence of occupancy was found. The East Fork Tilton River and Connelly Creek territories were also checked and an eagle was observed in the nest at the East Fork site.



Watch Mountain golden eagle territory

Mount St. Helens Elk Herd Collar Retrieval: Deer and Elk Specialist McCorquodale and Biologist Bergh located radio-collared study elk that were heard on mortality signal during last month's survey effort. A total of 16 collars were located from the air and then investigated on the ground. The main purpose for radio-collaring these elk is for a mark-recapture population

estimation study, but knowledge of the status of these collared elk is also used to calculate survival.

ALEA Grant Proposal Review: Biologists Stephens and West attended the ALEA review panel meeting to discuss regional priorities within the proposals submitted this year and to review budget modifications.

Western Pond Turtle Management: Biologists Anderson, George, and Holman initiated trapping at the Sondino site. A total of 12 basking and 12 hoop traps have been deployed in three of the more significant Sondino water bodies. The focus of this year's pond turtle work is to investigate the extent and severity of the shell disease condition in the Columbia River Gorge pond turtle populations. Following the initial four days of trapping, a total of 34 individual turtles have been encountered with an additional 13 recaptures. Shell disease rates will be summarized in future reports.

An additional aspect of this year's work is the collection of hatchlings for the head starting program. The initial hatchling of the 2013 season was captured on the fourth day of trapping. The Oregon Zoo will again be participating in the captive rearing phase of head starting these animals.



Initiation of the 2013 pond turtle season

Sandhill Cranes: Biologist Anderson and Biologist McFall from the Conboy National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) conducted a sandhill crane breeding survey along the Klickitat River on State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) property. Water levels were lower than normal this year, but a nesting pair of cranes was found in what little suitable habitat was available. Most sandhill crane breeding pairs that are below 3,000 feet elevation are currently incubating eggs.



Sandhill crane

As a follow-up to the nest search on the same DNR property, a site visit was conducted to review a habitat improvement project being conducted to maintain upland foraging habitat for sandhill cranes. A selective thinning of Ponderosa and Lodgepole pine was conducted in March to maintain a mosaic of open wet and dry meadow habitat. We appreciate DNR's interest in working with WDFW in the recovery of this state endangered species.



Habitat improvement project for sandhill cranes

Wildlife Areas

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Mount St. Helens Bank Seeding: Technician Sample finished broadcast seeding the north bank of the N. Fork Toutle River on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area with a mixture of grass seed to promote bank stability and prevent further erosion. Sample noticed the river had changed course slightly and moved closer to the bank within the week that efforts were being made to disperse the seed.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Turkey Hunting Season: Turkey hunting season got off to a quiet start probably since it began on a Monday, but more hunters began arriving on Thursday and Friday to set up camp for the weekend. Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven did not receive reports of turkeys harvested, but a few hunters mentioned seeing or hearing the birds. There are not as many camps on the Klickitat Wildlife Area as in past seasons.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Early Start for Fieldwork: Mild weather conditions have allowed Wildlife Area staff to start fieldwork early this year. We have finished mowing dike access roads on the Spears and Mossyrock units, access roads on the Kosmos Unit, and roadside brushing of the 900 system on the Peterman Unit.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Hunter Education: Officer Sympson and Wildlife Area staff taught evening hunter education classes at the Wildlife Area office with instruction on basic hunter safety, ethics, sportsmanship and conservation. Those passing the written test moved on for a skills evaluation-training course. Twelve students passed the course and received hunter safety cards needed to purchase their first hunting license.

Private Lands/Access

I-5 Access Site: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes pressure washed moss from part of the ADA walkway and paved parking and finished pesticide application around the parking lot.



I-5 Access Site before (above) and after (below)



REGION 6

None